



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve  
11500 Highway 150  
Mosca, Colorado 81146-9798  
Phone 719-378-6300 Fax 719-378-6310



## Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ's

<b><u>Logistics</u></b>	<b><i>1. How much does it cost?</i></b> <b><i>2. How will I get to the park?</i></b> <b><i>3. What do I need to bring?</i></b> <b><i>4. When are the sessions?</i></b> <b><i>5. What if I can't go on one of the trips? Can I switch dates?</i></b> <b><i>6. Can I invite friends and family?</i></b>
<b><u>Health and Safety</u></b>	<b><i>7. Is it dangerous? Will I be eaten by a bear?</i></b> <b><i>8. What if I get hurt?</i></b>
<b><u>In the Field</u></b>	<b><i>9. Who else will be in my group?</i></b> <b><i>10. What will we do?</i></b> <b><i>11. What will we eat?</i></b> <b><i>12. How much will we be hiking?</i></b> <b><i>13. What do I need to do back at school?</i></b>
<b><u>Benefits</u></b>	<b><i>14. Can I get credit for this?</i></b> <b><i>15. Can I be paid for this?</i></b> <b><i>16. Can I get a job out of this?</i></b>

### ***1. How much does it cost?***

Nothing! The only cost to you is your clothing and perhaps any gear items you need to purchase.

### ***2. How will I get to the park?***

A shuttle will pick up and drop off participants in locations like Alamosa, Mosca, and possibly Blanca. You will need to arrange transportation to and from these shuttle points.

### ***3. What do I need to bring?***

Group gear and some personal gear are supplied by the Ambassadors program. The Gear List is available online and should be followed closely. If you are having trouble acquiring some of the items on the gear list, let us know and we'll do our best to find you some loaners.

### ***4. When are the sessions?***

Orientation and Open House: Saturday June 27<sup>th</sup> (10 a.m. – noon)

Frontcountry and Backcountry Overnights: Saturday July 11<sup>th</sup>-Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>

5-day Sand Creek Adventure: (M-F) July 20<sup>th</sup>- July 24<sup>th</sup> or July 27<sup>th</sup>- July 31<sup>st</sup>

Ambassador Family Weekend: Saturday September 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup>

Please note your preferences for the Sand Creek trip on your application. We will try to accommodate you as best we can, but we cannot guarantee. Please be flexible.



## United States Department of the Interior NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve  
11500 Highway 150  
Mosca, Colorado 81146-9798  
Phone 719-378-6300 Fax 719-378-6310



### **5. *What if I can't go on one of the trips? Can I switch dates?***

We will try to accommodate your preferences on trip dates but because of group size limitations, we may not be able to switch.

### **6. *Can I invite friends and family?***

Parents/guardians are invited to attend the Orientation and Open House day so that they can have any questions about the program answered by instructors and park staff. Family members are also invited to the Ambassador Family Weekend in September. The overnight sessions and 5-day backpacking trip, however, are open only to enrolled Ambassadors.

### **7. *Is it dangerous? Will I be eaten by a bear?***

Wilderness, by its very nature, is an unpredictable place. There are hazards in wilderness areas that are unforeseeable and unpredictable. However, there are many things that we *can* do to minimize our risks in the wilderness. By practicing good safety and outdoor common sense, we can avoid many of these hazardous situations. Most people who come to visit the wilderness of Great Sand Dunes leave healthy and happy and we aim to make you one of them.

### **8. *What if I get hurt?***

Signing the Agreement for Individual Voluntary Services and having a parent/guardian sign the Parental Release entitles you to medical coverage under the Office of Workers Compensation. Any illness or injury you receive *while working within the bounds of your volunteer agreement* would be fully covered. Your emergency contacts will be called and you will be taken to the nearest medical care facility.

### **9. *Who else will be in my group?***

Participants will be recruited from all over the San Luis Valley. Selection is based on enthusiasm and leadership qualities, not academic performance. You may already know some of your fellow Ambassadors or you may be the sole representative from your school. All participants will be current high school freshman, sophomores, and juniors.

### **10. *What will we do?***

Everything! We will be studying some of the special resources of the Great Sand Dunes, doing some field science with park staff, helping to maintain trails with Student Conservation Association trail crews, and maybe teaching younger visitors about the park. All the while, we'll be learning outdoor skills and Leave No Trace practices.

### **11. *What will we eat?***

Because traveling in wilderness requires you to carry your food on your back, you may at first be unfamiliar with some of the menu choices. Food will have to be lightweight, non-perishable, and easily packable. During the first overnight, we'll discuss food options and you will have a chance to help plan the menu for the next trips.



## United States Department of the Interior NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve  
11500 Highway 150  
Mosca, Colorado 81146-9798  
Phone 719-378-6300 Fax 719-378-6310



### ***12. How much will we be hiking?***

We'll be hiking an average of about 5 miles each day – sometimes up to 8 miles, sometimes as few as 3 miles. For some participants, the hiking will be a physical challenge. For others, the challenge will be a mental one in keeping a slower pace than normal.

### ***13. What do I need to do back at school?***

Ambassador Projects may be anything from doing a presentation to your class to cleaning up a neighborhood trail to creating a poster or art project. You will be able to consult with your Great Sand Dunes instructors and your teachers back at school to find the right kind of project for you.

### ***14. Can I get credit for this?***

Yes! By completing all sessions of the program, you become eligible for either 75 volunteer service hours or 1 transferable elective credit from Byron Syring Delta Center. There are no fees to transfer credit to your school.

### ***15. Can I be paid for this?***

This is a purely volunteer and educational experience. However, if you complete all sessions *and* your Ambassador Project back in your community, you will be entitled to a \$100 scholarship from the Western National Parks Association.

### ***16. Can I get a job out of this?***

Ask around and you will find that most federal land employees got their feet in the door through a volunteer experience like this one. Although we cannot promise a paid position out of this, you will have an enormous competitive advantage over your average classmate. On our last day we will go over basic career counseling and how to get jobs with agencies like the National Park Service.